

ORIGINAL BALLAD

Sigh, sigh, and again sigh, sigh.
Mulan weaves, facing the door
No sound of the loom and the shuttle can be heard,

Only that of the daughter's sighs.
They ask her of who is on her mind
They ask her of who is in her heart.
"There is no one I think of,
There is no one I long for.

Last night I saw the draft posters,
The Khan is calling for many men:
A dozen volumes is the army list,
Each one with my father's name.
My father has no grown-up son,
And I have no elder brother.
I wish to buy a saddle and horse,
And serve in battle in my father's place."

She buys a spirited steed at the east market,
A saddle and blanket at the west market,
A bridle at the south market,
And a long whip at the north market.

At dawn, she takes leave of her Father and Mother,
At dusk, she camps beside the Yellow River.
She cannot hear the sound of her Father and Mother calling,
She only hears the rumbling waters of the Yellow River cry, tsien tsien.

At dawn, she takes leave of the Yellow River.
At dusk, she reaches the Black Mountains.
She cannot hear the sound of her Father and Mother calling,
She only hears the barbarians' horses of Mount Yen cry, tsiu tsiu.

She rides ten thousand miles in the path of war,
Crossing passes and mountains as if on wings.
On the northern winds come the rattle of the army pots,

Chilly light shines on her iron armor.
After a hundred battle, the general dies,
After ten years, the stout warriors return.

On their return, they see the Son of Heaven,
Who sits in the Hall of Brilliance.
He doles out promotions in twelve ranks,
And prizes in the hundreds and thousands and more.
The Khan asks Mulan what she desires.
"I have no use for a minister's post.
I ask only for a swift mount,
To carry me back to my home."

When Father and Mother hear their Daughter returning,
They run out from their home and from their city to meet her, leaning on each other.
When Elder Sister hears Mulan is coming,
She fixes her rouge by the door.
When Little Brother hears Mulan is coming,
He sharpens his knife, quick quick, for pig and sheep; a feast they will make.
"I open the door to my east chamber,
I sit on my couch in the west room,
I take off my battle cloak,
And put on my clothes of days past."
She fixes her wispy hair at the window sill,
And dabs on yellow flower powder by the mirror.

She goes out the door and sees her comrades-in-arms.
They are all amazed and perplexed.
Though they traveled together for twelve years,
They did not know Mulan was a lady.

"The male hare bounds here and there,
The female hare's eyes are muddled and fuddled.
But when the two run side by side,
How can any tell the male from the female?"

Translated by Wilt L. Idema and Han H. Frankel
in a new version edited by Alexander L. Stockdale

两雄同出当开我小弟阿爷愿可策归将朔但闻旦但闻东愿阿军昨女问不唧
兔行窗我弟闻东闻姊妹娘借汗勋来百气赴燕爷黄黄爷爷市为无十见何女闻复
脚看理战袍来来当出里足木转天子战死机胡唤女河流去暮宿山北西此兰卷汗亦女所所
地扑二伙云阁姊妹女驼所二天战死机胡唤女河流去暮宿山北西此兰卷汗亦女所所
走朔年伴鬃著我刀磨户郭足木转天子战死机胡唤女河流去暮宿山北西此兰卷汗亦女所所
能雌兔知伴镜我我旧霍理相送儿百千明堂归衣
辨眼木皆贴西霍理相送儿百千明堂归衣
我迷兰惊花阁霍红扶将还尚强故乡郎
是离是惶黄裳床霍红扶将还尚强故乡郎
雄雌郎猪羊乡郎